

November 2015

William Hutchinson Rowe Correspondence

William Hutchinson Rowe 1882-1955

Maine State Library

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ROWE, William H.

Born at Yarmouth, 1882

WILLIAM HUTCHINSON ROWE

November 28, 1928.

Hon. H. E. Dunnack,
Augusta, Maine,

Dear Mr. Dunnack:

Last March you asked for copies of my little booklets "Yarmouth Poets" and "Yarmouth Personages" for your Maine author collection. At the time I was unable to find copies of them but in looking over the books of an estate just a little while ago I found them and am sending them to you. There will be no charge for them.

Yours very truly,

William H. Rowe.

December 3, 1928

William H. Rowe
Yarmouth, Maine

My dear Rowe:

A thousand thanks for the little
pamphlets.

I notice there is no date of publication
on either. I would appreciate knowing when
these books were published.

Very truly yours,

HED:ME

March 29, 1928

William H. Rowe

Yarmouth, Maine

Dear Mr. Rowe:

We are very anxious to secure "Yarmouth Poets," and "Yarmouth Personages," for our Maine Author Collection.

If you can send us a copy of each of these books autographed for our special collection, it will be a great favor.

Make your bill in duplicate to the Maine State Library.

Very truly yours,

HED:ME

January 20, 1930

COPY

Mr. William H. Rowe,
Yarmouth, Maine.

My dear Mr. Rowe;-

We are sending you this morning a copy of your book "Shipbuilding days in Casco Bay", the copy which we plan to add to the Maine Author Collection and which is incomplete for that purpose, unless it has your autograph. Will you not only add your autograph but an inscription, also? We find that it adds very greatly to the interest of the books in this collection to have in each book a line or two by the author, as well as his autograph.

"Shipbuilding days in Casco Bay", is a valuable addition to any library, but especially to Maine Libraries. I trust that your interest in the fascinating subject of Maine shipping will continue and we shall have more books from you about it. The person who writes "The Maritime History of Maine" will be rendering the state valuable service.

The current issue of our Library Bulletin contains a brief note on our Maine Author Collection so we are sending you a copy of it. If you are interested in the Bulletin, we shall be glad to add your name to the mailing list. There is no charge for this publication.

We enclose five cents in stamps to pay the return postage on the book. That is sufficient postage if you will mark the package "Mailed under Section 444¹/₂ P. L. and R.

Very truly yours,

Maine State Library

By MCF

WILLIAM HUTCHINSON ROWE

Yarmouth, Maine,
January 24, 1930.

Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine,

Dear Miss Fuller:

With this I am returning
to you copy of Shipbuilding Days, auto-
graphed and inscribed as you requested.

Thank you for the kind words you
say concerning it.

I am interested in the Bulletin
and would like my name put on the mailing
list.

For some time I have been gathering
material for the Maritime History of Maine
and may stake out a claim for it unless
some abler hand takes it up. Could you tell
if the State Library has any of these, -

Story of the American Merchant Marine

John R. Spears

Report on the Shipbuilding Industry

Henry Hall

Pitkin's Statistical Review, 1783-1833.

If you have the first two named
volumes will you send them to me.

Yours truly,

W. H. Rowe

January 27, 1930

Mr. William Hutchinson Rowe,
Yarmouth, Maine.

My dear Mr. Rowe:-

Such a nice inscription, just the sort
of thing which we wish all of our authors would write for us!
Thank you very much for autographing and inscribing
"Shipbuilding Days in Casco Bay".

We are very glad to add your name to the Library
Bulletin mailing list. The next issue is due in April.

We have two of the books which you requested and
we are sending them to you today. Possibly we have the Report
on the Shipbuilding Industry by Henry Hall. Can you tell us
when and where it was published? Reports are not always
entered under the names of the authors, so it is frequently
rather difficult to locate them unless one knows something more
about them than the titles and names of the authors. If we
haven't it, we can perhaps borrow a copy for your use.

Very truly yours,

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

BY MCF

COPY

February 6 1930

Mr. William Hutchinson Rowe,

Barmouth, Maine

My dear Mr. Rowe;-

I enclose a clipping from the Portland Evening Express. Will you tell us what is the nature of the "assigned work" referred to in the second paragraph? Am I correct in assuming that you and Mr. Patterson and Mr. Hall were appointed to work on a maritime history of Maine? Can you tell us whether Mr. Patterson and Mr. Hall have as yet written anything on the subject? I think that it would be interesting to know when your present work was begun.

Very truly yours

(SIGNED) MCF

WILLIAM HUTCHINSON ROWE

Yarmouth, Maine,
February 14, 1930.

Miss Marion Cobb Fuller,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine,

Dear Miss Fuller:

The clipping which you send is
correct in the main but not quite.

The committee of the Maine Historical Society referred to was appointed by Judge Hale soon after my first book came out. I meant to have got the exact reading of the record when at the library Tuesday but it slipped my mind but we were ^{not} given very detailed instructions but were to collect what material we could and work toward the writing and publishing of a maritime history of the state.

Mr. Patterson I think has done something around Wiscasset but I think Mr. Hall has not attempted any thing as yet but is very helpful to me because of his very obliging disposition and personal knowledge of the days of the "downeasters". The committee was appointed in the summer of 1926.

Will you please renew to two books
I now have out for two weeks. *Mar. 3 R.B.*

Yours very truly,

William H. Rowe.

Casco Bay Ship Days

Yarmouth Man Tells Story Of Vessels And Men

SHIP-BUILDING DAYS IN CASCO BAY, 1727-1890. By William Hutchinson Rowe, privately published. \$5.00.

(By Fred K. Owen)

The ancient glory of Maine was her ship yards, the ships that were constructed therein and the men who built and sailed them. On all the seven seas were Maine ships known, and with the ports of the most remote corners of the World her captains were familiar. For more than a hundred and fifty years this coast of ours rang with the sound of hammer and adze, as these vessels were shaped for carrying the trade of the World and from out of our hundred ports they sailed away to carry the name and fame of the Dirigo state. Maine was widely known as the "Mother of the Wooden Ship" and well she merited that title, for her forests supplied the best of material and she nurtured a race of men who knew how to shape the products of the State's forests into the stoutest and swiftest craft afloat.

Casco Bay Region

Casco Bay was the earliest of the fields of activity for the Maine ship builders and one of the last to witness their going. Mr. Rowe in his book has undertaken to tell of these glorious days and of the great things that then were wrought. A perusal of the volume has convinced this writer that the task could not have come to more competent or sympathetic hands. Rather a wonderful narrative we find this work of Mr. Rowe to be. Every page bears witness of the most painstaking and laborious research, and while the facts are there, there also is appreciation and understanding of the romance and the color of these golden days of the past. The author knows his subject, but what is of equal importance, he has the skill to describe and relate.

He tells the story of the ship yards of Casco Bay from Dunstan's landing to Middle Bay, recording the names of craftsmen who labored therein and giving lists of the vessels that they constructed. But interspersed with these facts of a prosaic nature are well told tales of the adventures of Casco Bay men upon the blue waters.

Some of these stories are new, in fact a surprisingly large number of them are and while they are all true, they are worthy to rank in interest and thrill with the fiction of Captain Marryat, Hermann Melville, Clark Russell and others whose tales of the sea have become English classics.

Maine's Forests

For many years the pine forests of Maine furnished the masts for the war ships of Britain and helped in no small part to make that Nation the mistress of the seas. So long as Maine was a British colony, the best of these straight and stalwart pines were claimed for the navy of the mother country. Somewhat reluctantly the colonists yielded these treasures of their forests and when the war for Independence came, they were not long in employing them against her.

It was new to us and we think will be to a majority of those who have the privilege of reading Mr. Rowe's his-

Ship Historian



William H. Rowe

An active member of the Maine Historical Society, Mr. Rowe, prominent citizen of Yarmouth, has written the story of Casco Bay men and ships.

tory, that the burning of Portland by Captain Mowatt, one of the chief tragedies of American Colonial history, was provoked by a dispute with the Mother country over the possession of the masts cut in Maine forests.

Fiction contains no more romantic narrative than the story of the privateer Dash of Portland to which the writer devotes a chapter and which well might be made the subject of an entire volume. The Dash was the pride of Casco Bay and of this dashing privateer it has been recorded that "she never suffered defeat, never attacked an enemies' ship in vain, was never injured by a hostile shot and knew no equal in speed." To be a member of the crew of the Dash was to entitle one to the rank of hero and the highest social standing. And the end of the Dash was as romantic as her career. She was swallowed up by the element upon which she so long reigned supreme, but just how has remained forever a mystery. She became the ghost ship of Whittier's "Dead Ship of Harpswell," verses which thousands have read and have thrilled to read.

Skipper Ireson

Another interesting and thrilling bit of history related by Mr. Rowe is the true story of Skipper Ireson, the Whittier Verses concerning whom every school child at one time used to recite. History has already set the Marblehead skipper right with subsequent generations, but Mr. Rowe, in going into the story in detail, records that it was the crew of the ship "Active" of Brunswick from which Ireson and his crew sailed away, when passing them in sinking condition. But Ireson was innocent of the charges made against him for his crew refused to go back although the skipper urged them and pleaded with them to do so. If any deserved to be "tarred and feathered and carried in a cart" it was these sailors and not old Ireson.

Following the discovery of gold in California, Portland was the port of departure for hundreds of Maine Argonauts and many and thrilling were the adventures that some of them experienced. Again reading like a romance is the story of Dr. Samuel Merrett, a native of Harpswell and a graduate of Bowdoin medical school. The

doctor had settled in Plymouth, Mass., and was engaged in the practice of his profession, when his adventurous spirit was fired with the tales that were brought back from the land of gold and he fitted out a ship of his own and loaded her with a cargo for the Pacific coast. He could not sell his cargo and he found no gold, but he later did have several good strokes of business on the coast and ended by buying the land where the city of Oakland now stands. He paid a thousand dollars for this tract and sold it for half million. He died a multimillionaire and the four hundred thousand dollars of his fortune came back to Bowdoin College.

Mutiny At Sea

The story of the mutiny on the "Albion Cooper" which sailed out of Portland one July day in 1857 forms one of the great sea tragedies of all time and quite fittingly this tale is given a chapter all its own in Mr. Rowe's history.

Again there is the story of the achievement of Captain Josiah Mitchell of Freeport who on July 15, 1866 arrived in Honolulu with his crew of fourteen half-starved men after trying to make headway in an open boat for 43 days. The annals of the sea contain no record to equal this and as Mr. Rowe relates, the amazing adventure found an equally remarkable chronicler, for Mark Twain, then a reporter for a Sacramento paper, happened to be in the Sandwich Islands at the time and made Captain Mitchell's

story the subject of his first magazine article.

The foregoing merely touches upon some of the highlights of Mr. Rowe's most interesting and most valuable work. In compiling and writing this history the Yarmouth man has performed a task of the highest service to his State and country. It was a business that was undertaken none too soon, for by another generation much that he has recorded, might have been forever lost.

WILLIAM HUTCHINSON ROWE

Yarmouth, Maine, September 2, 1931.

Marion Cobb Fuller,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine,

Dear Miss Fuller:

I hope you will pardon me for the long delay in answering your letter of the eighteenth. I hoped to find time to get into my notes and send you something of more importance than I am able. You know I am a poor druggist and my maritime work is my whist and golf and in the summer time we are so busy in earning our living that we have very little time to give to riding our hobby. Instead of a neatly tabulated list therefore I shall have to write you informally hoping there may be some grain that you can use among the chaff.

Last year I was in every shipbuilding town on the Maine coast with the exception of those on the Bluehill peninsula for a preliminary survey and have a lot of stuff located which I am going after as soon as I can. The foundation of my particular interest, the building industry, is the lists of vessels built in the various towns. I have manuscript lists from forty seven places at present, more or less complete, and representing some eight thousand craft, with tonnage, dates and builders names. These have been gathered from all sorts of places, old newspapers, published custom house lists, Lloyd's registers, personal interviews, family lists etc. The customs lists in Maine have been very generally destroyed by fire. Bangor and Portland are good examples. I have also indexed thousands of references to newspaper and magazine material but it would take days to copy them and verify the references.

I find very little manuscript material in the various libraries. The Maine Historical have the Logs of the privateers, Dart, Dash, Rover, Favorite, Teaser and Young Teaser and also the Account books of the Claps and one or two of their log books mostly referring to the West India and Russian trades. Mr. Howard Corning, who you probably know, has combed the state in the interest of the Baker Library of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration must have a large manuscript list and is very generous in allowing its use. Could you not get a list from him. I hope later to put in quite a little time in his collection.

I suppose you have the matter in the various town histories listed so I will not mention these and also that you have used the excellent bibliography in Mr. Marks' Harvard thesis

WILLIAM HUTCHINSON ROWE

on the Maritime History of Maine. Here are a few items, of not great importance, that I have not seen listed anywhere which may be interesting;

The Wreck of the Rainer, O.J.H. (Omar J. Humphrey)
W.H. Stevens Co. Portland, 1887.

Cruise of the Carribee, Harpers Magazine, Oct. 1907.

Journal of a Voyage aboard the Ship Arab, S.W. Chase.
Mss. in Maine Historical Soc. Library.

Autobiography of Benjamin Webster, Thurston Print,
Portland, 1900.

X Dropps of Spray from Southern Seas, Lucy Brown Reynolds,
Mail Pub. Co., Waterville, 1896.

Of course you are familiar with the beautiful pictures of many of the vessels in Maine reproduced in the three volumes New England Sailing Vessels, published by the Salem Marine Soc., and also in Mr. Matthews' American Sailing Ships, as also Lubbocks Downeasters.

I am sorry not to have been of more assistance to you in this very valuable work you are doing and hope you will command me if there is anything I can be of assistance to you in promoting it further. I shall look with great interest for my October Bulletin. Thank you for the words of appreciation concerning my two books. I am working every minute I can steal from my other work on the Maritime History of Maine but as you see from my first paragraph the time is so limited that I am in constant fear that someone will get ahead of me, but I shall have had great fun in preparing the material anyway.

Yours sincerely,

William H. Rowe.

answered

M.C.F.

9/11

Personnel

TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE FALL OF 1937

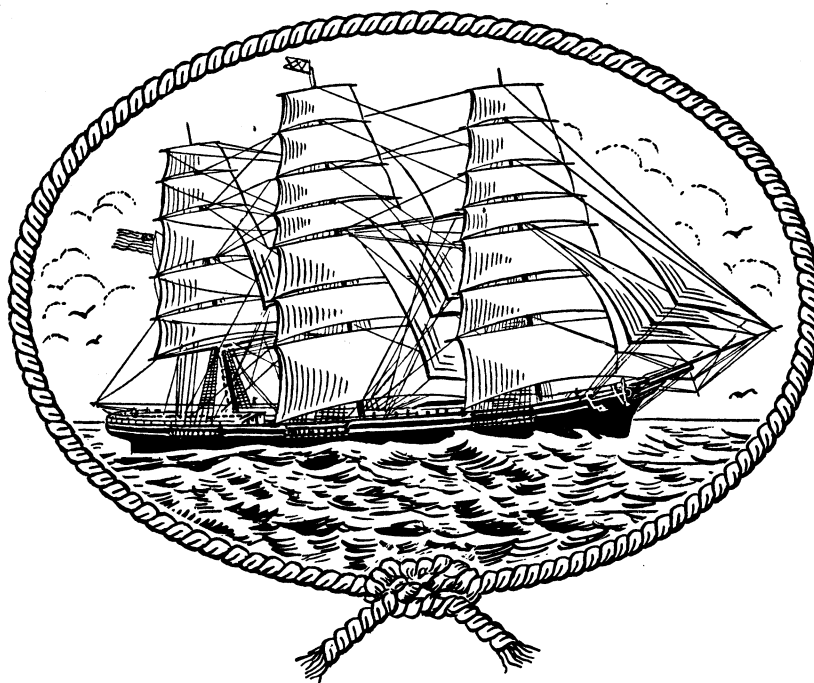
Ancient North Yarmouth
AND
Yarmouth, Maine

1636-1936

A History




WILLIAM HUTCHINSON ROWE



YARMOUTH, MAINE

1937

Something About the Book

HE only history of three centuries of one of the most ancient towns in Maine. The mother town of Yarmouth, Freeport, Cumberland, Pownal, Harpswell and the present North Yarmouth.

A connected narrative of the development of a community paralleling the entire history of the nation and of its contribution to national movements.

As a "buffer town" between the Eastern Indians and the settlements to the west it was twice destroyed during the Indian wars. The story of this period is for the first time fully told, the larger part never before being published.

The third and permanent settlement was made by the grandsons and daughters of the Pilgrim Fathers and many names of the families of Plymouth appear in Maine for the first time at North Yarmouth.

The maritime history is very full. The volume contains all published in the author's *Shipbuilding Days in Old North Yarmouth* and much more of interest concerning those days in a shipbuilding, ship-sailing and ship-loving community.

Extraneous matter, necessary for reference but fatal to the enjoyment of the connected narrative, has been collected in the appendix and a general and name index added, making it invaluable to the genealogical worker and student.

The book will contain about four hundred and fifty pages, printed on antique book paper, bound in cloth (gold stamped) back, 8vo, page $6\frac{1}{8}$ x $9\frac{1}{8}$ inches, printed by The Southworth-Anthoensen Press. The edition is five hundred copies contingent on the subscription for three hundred copies before October first. It is expected that this edition will go immediately out of print, so early orders are advisable.

Copies of this notice will be gladly sent to people who may be interested if the names are sent to the publisher.

Contents

- I. THE PIONEERS OF WESTCUSTOGO, 1636-1678.
- II. NORTH YARMOUTH, A PROPRIETARY, 1678-1689.
- III. NORTH YARMOUTH, A PLANTATION, 1689-1733.
- IV. COLONIAL NORTH YARMOUTH, 1733-1760.
- V. REVOLUTIONARY NORTH YARMOUTH, 1760-1788.
- VI. THE OLD CHURCH UNDER THE LEDGE, 1729-1818.
- VII. SIXTY YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT, 1788-1848.
- VIII. RAILROADS, DIVISION AND THE CIVIL WAR, 1848-1870.
- IX. SHIPBUILDING DAYS, 1794-1889.
- X. RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES SINCE 1797.
- XI. EDUCATION.
- XII. INDUSTRY, COMMERCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL.
- XIII. FRATERNAL, PATRIOTIC AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS.
- XIV. DEVELOPMENT OF THE YARMOUTH OF TODAY, 1870-1936.
- XV. YARMOUTH IN THE WORLD WAR.

Appendix; Soldiers of the Colonial, Revolutionary, 1812, Civil and World Wars. Civil List, Selectmen, Town Clerks, Town Treasurers, Representatives to Legislature, Senators and State and County Officers. Pastors of the Churches. Vessels Built. Population and Valuation.

List of Illustrations

The end-papers are a copy of the map of the "Home Lots" made for the committee of the General Court in 1727. The thirty or more full-page plates are reproduced from rare sketches and photographs of the village, shipyards and vessels, including some forty-five portraits of men and women of note in the history of the town.

Something About the Author

"WILLIAM H. ROWE's writing has been done as an historian. Two comprehensive and authentic volumes have come from his pen as a result of patient and diligent research in a field close to his heart by virtue of environment and heredity.

"Interested as a youth in the history of historic Yarmouth, his birthplace, Mr. Rowe's nearly forty years of study and interest in the subject has led to the accumulation of a vast store of information. His two books were the by-products of his preparation of a history of Yarmouth which is now ready for the printer.

"The first book he wrote was *Shipbuilding Days and Tales of the Sea*, a history of the colorful historical days of old Yarmouth, identified so romantically and practically with the story of American shipbuilding. The book's style was that of a novel, full of interesting tales of the days when Yarmouth was one of the most active and best-known ship construction towns along the New England coast. The book painted old scenes realistically, recreating deftly the old-time glory of the town when skeletons of new ships lined Royall's River.

"He continued the collection of historical material, and when he found that he possessed a mass of marine material too great for his town history he wrote another book, entitled *Shipbuilding Days in Casco Bay*. This book was filled to the gunwhales with fascinating lore and fact of distant days when shipyards dotted the shores of Casco Bay. Again he proved a delightful story-teller with spell-binding accounts of adventure, and thrilling chapters on true tales of the sea and the men from this vicinity who sailed them.

"Since the publication of this book, which contributed a great deal to the published records of this part of the Eastern seaboard, Mr. Rowe has renewed his patient collection of facts and preparation of a history, that is bound to prove fascinating, of the town of Yarmouth. He has enough material on hand, in addition, to write a maritime history of Maine and it is to be hoped that he does not delay in producing what must be a valuable contribution to Maine records and literature."
—*Symposium of Maine Authors, Portland Sunday Telegram*, October 25, 1936.

ORDER FORM

WILLIAM H. ROWE, Yarmouth, Maine

_____193

Please send when ready to address given below _____ copies of
ANCIENT NORTH YARMOUTH AND YARMOUTH, MAINE, 1636-1936—
A HISTORY at \$5 each.

() Check enclosed. () C.O.D.

Name _____

Address _____

August 17, 1937

Mr. William H. Rowe
Yarmouth
Maine

Dear Mr. Rowe:

We have received the very interesting advance announcement of the publication of ANCIENr NORTH YARMOUTH AND YARMOUTH, MAINE.

Of course we will want a copy for the Maine Author Collection, and also two copies for general lending and reference purposes. Will you therefore place our advance order for three copies of your book, to be sent with a bill upon publication.

We trust that you will continue your kindness and interest in the Maine Author Collection, and will inscribe one copy of ANCIENr NORTH YARMOUTH AND YARMOUTH, MAINE, for this purpose.

You have our best wishes for the success of what will indeed be a valuable historical item.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hm

SECRETARY

December 17, 1937

Mr. William H. Rowe
Yarmouth
Maine

Dear Mr. Rowe:

The three copies of ANCIENT NORTH YARMOUTH AND YARMOUTH, MAINE, have arrived, and we thank you for your kindness in autographing one copy for the Maine Author Collection.

This volume is indeed an achievement of which you may justly be proud. Its comprehensive pages confess to the long hours of research which were necessary, and the patience and skill with which the account is rendered. Certainly your ability is a fine Maine contribution to the literature of today, and Maine people should be grateful to you for the work which has gone into the compilation of this very valuable history.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hm

SECRETARY

October 29, 1948

Mr. William Hutchinson Rowe
Yarmouth
Maine

Dear Mr. Rowe:

The library has two copies of your MARITIME HISTORY OF MAINE on order, and as you can easily believe, it is a book we anticipate with unqualified enthusiasm.

We hope that the Maine Author Collection may continue to benefit by your generous interest, and that an inscribed copy of the new book may join your earlier ones. It would be a distinguished addition.

Our good wishes for the success of the new history go to you.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

February 23, 1949

Mr. William Hutchinson Rowe
Yarmouth
Maine

Dear Mr. Rowe:

The inscribed copy of THE MARITIME HISTORY OF MAINE is being added to the Maine Author Collection where it will honor and grace the shelves forever. There are no words left to say about the book -- everyone has said them! We had to buy more copies to supply the demand from our readers, and the value of this history is not diminishing. It is a book which we shall need for a long, long time.

Thank you for writing it, and for presenting the exhibit copy to the collection.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj